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**To:** [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comment Received from Public Access  
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Application Reference No. : SMD/2023/0523

Site Address: Land At Rownall Farm Rownall Road Wetley Rocks Staffordshire ST9 0BT

Comments by: Neil

From:

Weston Close  
Ash Bank  
Werrington

Phone:

Email:

Submission: Objection

Comments: From my reasearch and understanding it is my full opinion that In line with the NPPF, local authorities should consider use of Brownfield land provided it is not of high environmental value over green belt as part of the renewables policy.

Green belt land by it's very definition is already classed as of high environmental value. The application should be rejected on this basis and of the points below:

1. Solar farms are hugely inefficient, a report I read detailed that a "140 acre solar farm is capable of supplying electricity to around 9,000 homes. One wind turbine in the North sea is capable of supplying power to 16,000 homes". The report goes on to say "that in 1 year 78% of the UK's electricity came from off shore wind". There is no real evidence that solar can generate enough energy to meet the net zero targets. Destruction of green belt will do more damage to the carbon offset with long term negative effect.
2. Solar panels alter views of the countryside and key features that punctuate it. Rows of solar panels completely alter landscape character and have a massive negative impact on the bio diversity. The land becomes permanently shaded by the panels causing degrading. A report I have read outlined the following. "Transitory animals will have their traditional routes blocked", "Bird and Bat deaths are common as they mistake glass for water", "topsoil is removed and cleaning materials can contaminate the soil". Land is no longer suitable for habitation or bio diversity net gain.
3. Fire risk. I have read and seen footage of actual battery vehicle fires and the work required to recover these vehicles. My belief is that a lithium-ion battery storage represents a high fire risk. A question to the authorities. What happens if a panel breaks? What about toxic chemical release? What about a fire? How will this be managed? Batteries burn for days, not hours. Has this been considered? How will surrounding land be protected in the summer when everywhere dries out? How will this land be recovered in such a situation? Who pays for this?
4. What about the damage to residential amenity. Residential neighbours will be surrounded by industrialisation, heavy traffic, noise, dust, increased light. Fans will be needed to cool inverters causing constant industrial noise that can travel for miles. These will run constantly in summer with potential for ingress into homes disturbing family rights to private family life. As the area is so quiet and undisturbed, the impact of noise is massively increased. A potential consideration of breach under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998
5. Then as mentioned above, there is the increase in industrial grade traffic, lighting pollution, land once open green belt countryside surrounded by heavy fencing, cctv cameras, site maintenance. This will create a negative impact on the local road network system that is not fit for this scale of industrial development. The surrounding road networks are mainly B class roads with poor A class link roads. There is by the very nature of the area an increase risk to road safety.
6. Anti social behaviour. There is already a marked increase in local anti social behaviour and thefts. CCTV does not work effectively when groups wear balaclavas. The site will have high value equipment on it and has

serious potential for boundary breach, criminal damage and theft. The police are already stretched to capacity within the district. How will the security needs be met? Who will pay for this?

To conclude.

The application should in my full opinion be rejected.

From information gathered in other areas of the country and concerns identified. I feel there is an increased risk of fire, destruction of natural habitat and it will have a negative impact on the bio diversity net value for the area. My understanding from the draft NPPF is any new development must add 10%BNG. How will this be achieved in the area? Local authority needs to factor in the % loss caused by the development and then add 10%. Where will this be implemented with such widespread destruction of green belt? There are plenty of roof spaces, unused low grade brownfield sites that should be considered. Using Green Belt land is cheap and a quick fix. Like putting a sticky plaster on a problem rather than create a long term stable solution.

I also ask the following, and would like consideration by local authority:

A. Will the land ever revert back to green belt?

B. What will happen to equipment at the end of it's cycle? Will it be recycled? If so, how? and, what is the cost? Who will pay for this?

C. What condition will the land be in in 40 years time? Or at the end if the license?

D. Under new draft NPPF due to the degrading of land, will the land now be classed as Grey Belt? If so, how can you as the local authority safeguard that this application is not a sleight of hand to release green belt land for future housing or development? There must be a clause if passed that the land owner is responsible for all costs associated with land restoration to green belt.

E. Is there a bond attached to the development? If so, how much for? What does it cover? Is there any time constraints?

F. The local authority is required to have a renewables policy. Where is this? Is it up to date? Does it consider changes under the new government and NPPF draft? How does it reflect the circumstances of the district?

I urge local authority to consider the long term negative impact of this application. Once we start to develop on green belt it is lost.

It is my opinion our district has high grade land and outstanding countryside. This green belt land and the surrounding land and road network is not suitable for industrial scale solar plants and should be unanimously rejected. The government may well push for solar and there is a place for renewable solar energy. This must not be at the detriment of our wildlife, habitat, green belt and negative impact of the quality and private life of local residents.

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